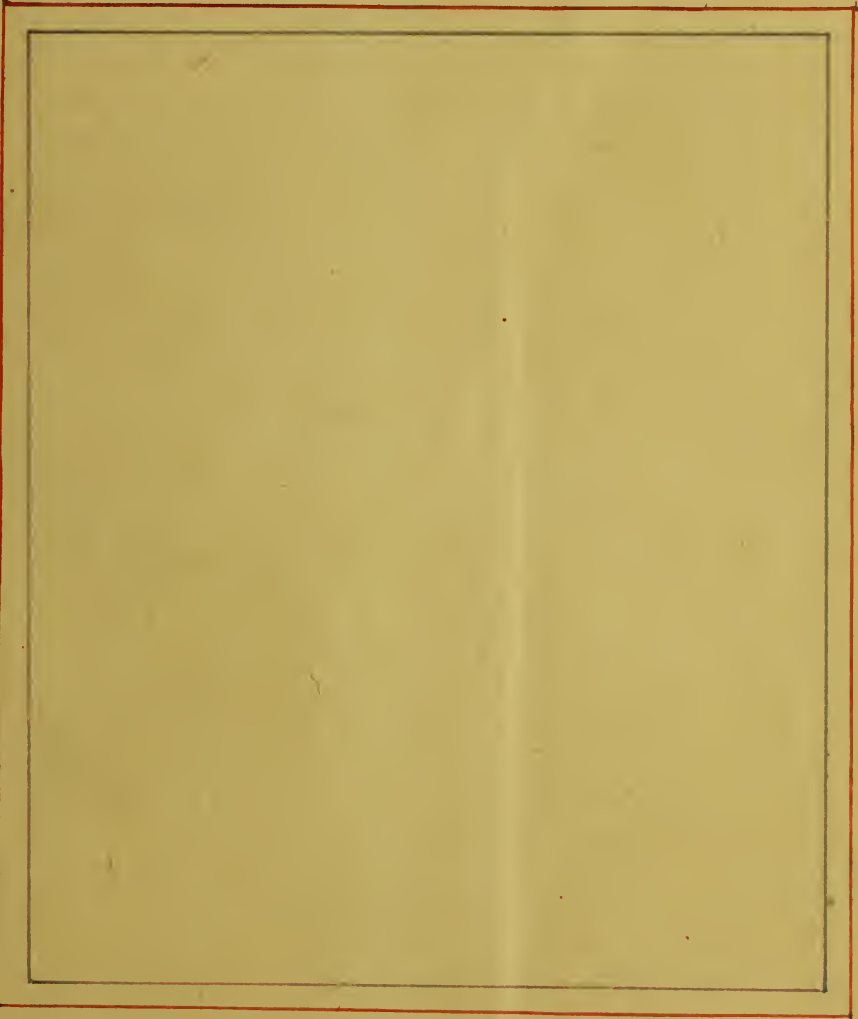


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Abraham Lincoln,

The Reincarnation Of Thomas Jefferson.

By Theodore Wilmut Browne.



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ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND THOMAS JEFFERSON, WHOSE REMARKABLE CAREERS PRESENT AN
EXTRAORDINARY PARALLEL.

Abraham Lincoln the Reincarnation of Thomas Jefferson.

**A Strangely Fascinating Theory, Propounded for the Interest
of All Who are Patriotic.**

By THEODORE WILMUT BROWNE.

WAS Abraham Lincoln a reincarnation of Thomas Jefferson? There are those who believe that he was. In the extraordinary parallels which exist in the life-stories of these two men they discover an argument favoring their theory, which is that every soul has a mission to fulfil, and that the fulfilment may require more than one incarnation. The apparent relationship in the lives of the two famous statesmen named is cited as a modern instance of what these theorists trace to times much more remote than those marked by the birth and the re-birth of the American Republic, whose natal day is celebrated during the current

month of July. When Elijah made his deathless ascent into heaven, as the biblical story tells, his mantle fell upon the shoulders of Elisha, who then became the prophet and leader of Israel. This narrative, on the theory just mentioned, is not an historical statement, but must be regarded as an allegorical presentment of the fact that the later prophet was the incarnation of the earlier one.

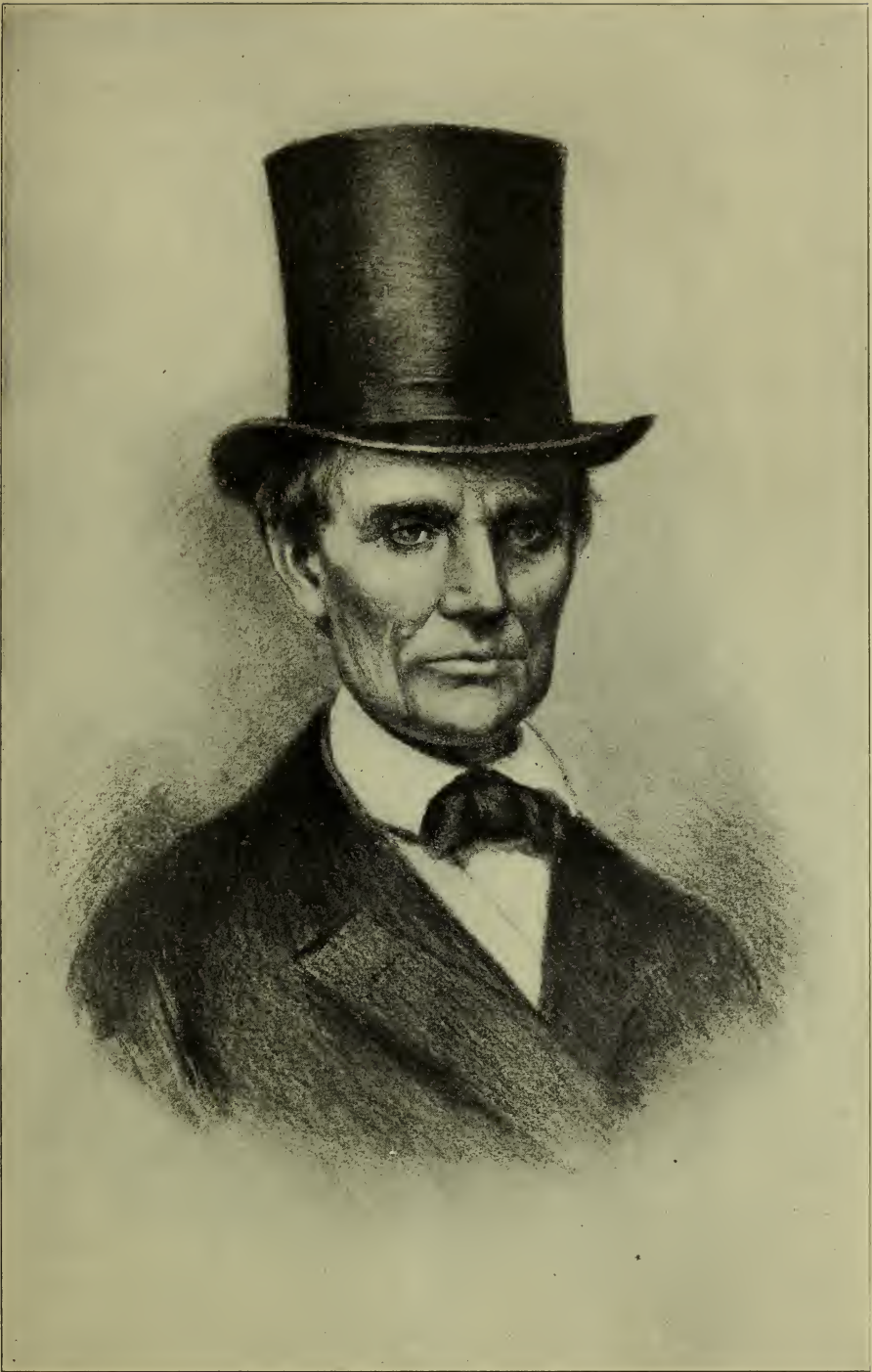
Whatever view may be taken of the idea that Thomas Jefferson, who framed the thought out of which the American Republic was born, lived anew in the person of Abraham Lincoln, through whose instrumentality the union of sovereign States was

welded into indissoluble nationality, the argument in its favor is a strangely interesting one.

The keynote in the Declaration of Independence, drafted by Jefferson and promulgated on July 4, 1776, was this broad statement of the principle of human liberty: "We hold this truth to be self-evident, that all men are created free and equal." The successful issue of the War for Independence, already begun, but now for the first time dignified with formality through this immortal document, gave to the world, not a new nation in fact, but only its possibility in the guise of a federation of States. The solidarity of this union was menaced again and again by divergences of local interests and sentiment, but the greatest menace lay in the existence of an institution which an ever-increasing number of people looked upon as being diametrically in opposition to that basic principle which gave to the Declaration of Independence its broad foundation of justice. Constituent States in the Union, whose noblest sons had offered and sacrificed life and fortune in maintenance of the self-evident truth that all men are created free, held human beings in the bonds of slavery, buying and selling them like cattle, and numbering them among their chattels. Generation after generation of a race, tolerated only because of its usefulness in servitude, came into the world and passed from it, knowing nothing of the natural human heritage of freedom. Here was something more than an inconsistency in the life of a republic based upon the principle of universal liberty; it was a growing spot of soreness which was sapping that very life. In the great soul of the republic there was rebellion against it, and this asserted itself with growing vehemence. It was only when, through the agony of civil war, this vast source of discord had been eliminated, that the nascent spirit

of nationality reached its full development. It was Thomas Jefferson whose pen traced the words, "We hold this truth to be self-evident, that all men are created free and equal." It was Abraham Lincoln whose pen, mightier than the sword, made of these words a verity, dealing the master stroke in a conflict which had been waged for generations, until it culminated in one of the greatest and most heart-breaking wars of history. Nearly a century elapsed after Jefferson penned his noble declaration of the principle of human liberty before America could stand before the world fully justified in her proud claim to the title of "The Land of the Free."

Herein is found the merging of these two grand souls which the reincarnation theory regards as one. Jefferson and Lincoln were each the man for the hour. The work of the latter complemented that of the former—completed it, in fact. The single parallelism just presented involves more than the statement includes as it stands. It brings forward the idea that reincarnation means progress. That which was a sentiment with Jefferson was a conviction with Lincoln. Both were natives of slave-holding States—Jefferson a Virginian, and Lincoln a Kentuckian. With the former there was every reason for looking with favor upon the institution of slavery, for he was surrounded by its influences and shared largely in whatever advantages it afforded. He was a man of wealth and owned a great estate, which necessitated, under existing conditions, the ownership of many slaves. Nevertheless he regarded the institution with disfavor, and he never bought or sold slaves in the shambles of the market. Years prior to the Declaration of Independence, in 1769, when he was a member of the Virginia legislature, he introduced a resolution for the emancipation of slaves in that State; and later, in his



From a daguerreotype made in 1855.

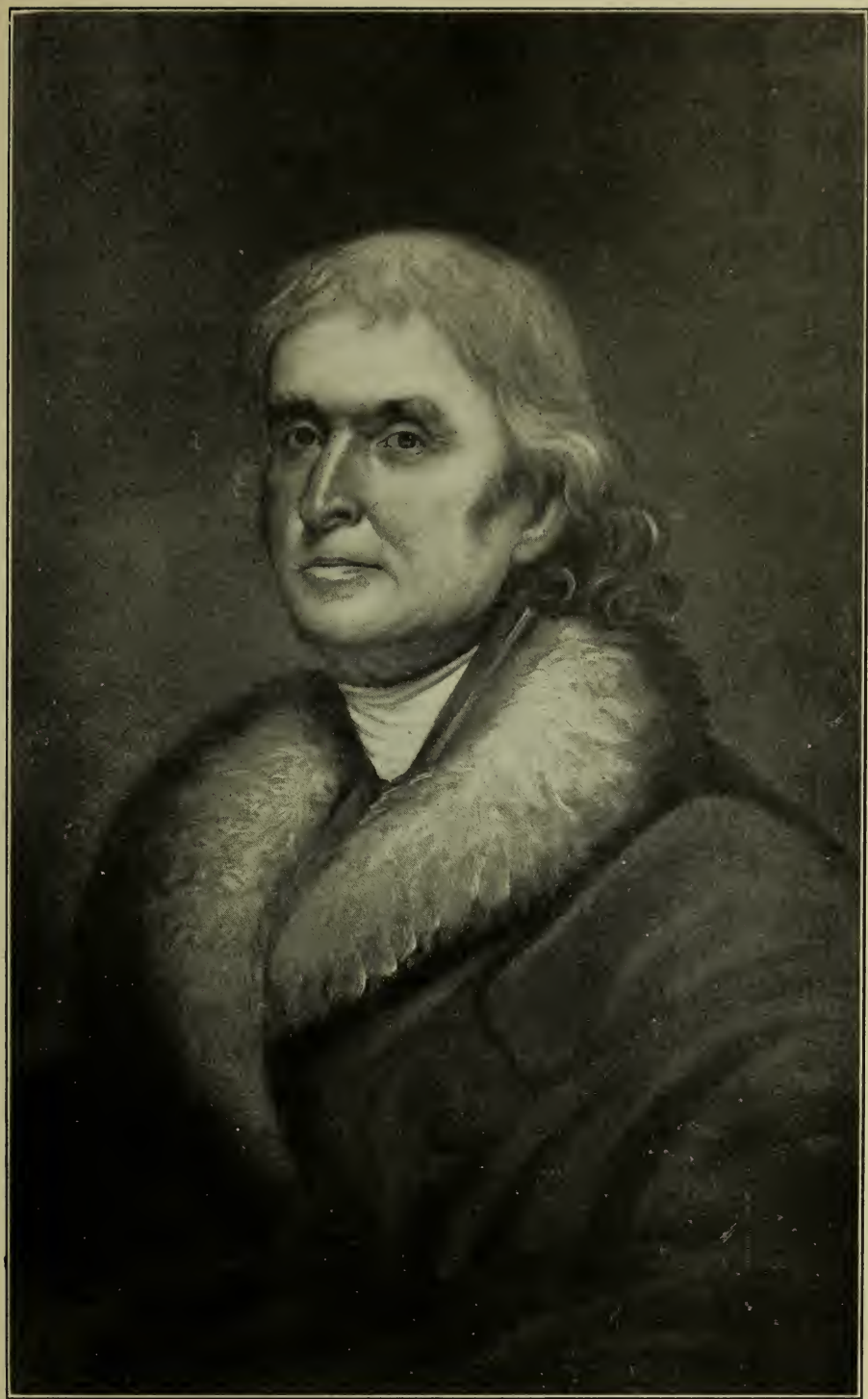
A HITHERTO UNPUBLISHED PORTRAIT OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

higher capacity as President of the United States, he called the attention of Congress to the ripeness of the time for prohibiting the importation of slaves into the country. Lincoln, although born in Kentucky, was almost exotic to the slave belt of the country, his family originating in Pennsylvania. Their circumstances precluded their becoming slaveholders, even had their Quaker antecedents permitted it; and the future President was only a child when his parents removed to the free soil of Indiana. In his opening manhood he accompanied them in their migration to the State of Illinois, upon which he was destined to bring so much of honor. With that love of freedom which was inspired by the new life in the great free States where the formative years of his life were passed, he was naturally a man whose sympathies would be enlisted in behalf of the slave in the agitation which, entering more and more deeply into the shaping of political movements, was rapidly approaching a critical stage. Lincoln was one of the earliest to enroll in the Republican party, which made the abolition of slavery an essential element in its platform. He was its first victorious leader in a national campaign, and the election of 1860 made him President. The problem which confronted him when he took office was not the elimination of the institution which Jefferson looked upon with disfavor; it was the preservation of the Union which Jefferson had been so influential in creating, and which the crisis in the history of slavery now threatened with disruption. The perpetuation of this Union was a matter of the gravest solicitude with Jefferson until his life closed. It was as a means to this end that, amid the excitement of a fierce internecine war, and after due warning to all most concerned, Lincoln executed the summary act of immediate emanci-

pation. Thus, in a double sense, he made his life-work a complement to that of Jefferson.

Another point of merging in these two lives is found in the peaceful acquisition, during their respective administrations as President, of two vast territories, the cession of which to the United States Government cancelled forever the recognized rights of two powerful foreign nations to the control of any portion of the American continent. The Louisiana Purchase of 1803, although its subject-ed Jefferson's administration to adverse criticism, has justified itself in many ways. France, with her mercurial restlessness, was no longer upon our borders. We had secured an unbroken domain from the Atlantic to the Pacific ocean, and from the Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico. The acquired territory cost us \$15,000,000, or less than two cents for each one hundred acres. It is represented to-day by fifteen great and prosperous States in the Union, each contributing to the national wealth annually much more than the entire amount of the purchase. Lincoln's administration gave us Alaska, territorially as great as the Louisiana Purchase, rich in its mineral and other resources, and already creditor to an aggregate of material benefit which represents in a vastly multiplied sum the \$7,200,000 paid for it. This purchase rid the continent peacefully of the Russian Bear. Behind both transactions may be discovered the thought of American unity and the vision of a self-perpetuating republic which were common to Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln.

Both of these men were broad-minded and intellectually powerful, honest in their thought, true to their ideals, straightforward in their policies, and democratic in their simplicity of life. As lovers of liberty they held law in due respect and stood firm for right and justice. One of the strangest things notice-



From a Painting by Jeremiah Dick.

By Courtesy of the Hon. Jefferson Levy.

A HITHERTO UNPUBLISHED PORTRAIT OF THOMAS JEFFERSON,

able in a comparison of their lives is the similarity in the careers of two men whose birth and early training were attended by circumstances so widely divergent—Jefferson born to wealth and ease, and Lincoln born to poverty and toil; Jefferson educated at a college, and Lincoln acquiring his education through lonely study in hours stolen from the period of rest between long days of arduous labor. Both were big men physically. Jefferson was six feet two inches in height, and Lincoln six feet four inches. Jefferson was admitted to the bar at the age of twenty-four, and was elected to the legislature at the age of twenty-six. Lincoln reversed this order, being elected to the legislature of Illinois when he was twenty-three years old. This led to his studying law, and he was admitted to the bar when he was twenty-seven years old. Both men distinguished themselves as lawyers, and both were men of mark in their early public life. Jefferson was thirty-two years old when he was elected to Congress, and Lincoln was five years older when he entered upon national legislation. Here again the force-

ful nature of each man made itself felt, and in his time each was central in every gathering which he attended. Lincoln attained the presidency at an earlier age than his great predecessor. He was only fifty-two years old when he was elected. Jefferson was six years older. Both were re-elected, and each succeeded himself. Here, as at the beginning of their lives, there is divergence. Jefferson retired from his high office at the close of his second term, to live in dignified privacy until the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, with its booming of cannon, marked the release from earth of the noble soul which conceived its brave utterance. Lincoln had scarcely entered upon his second term when the hand of the assassin laid him low. But his work was finished. The long fratricidal strife was ended, and the man who had so fearlessly borne his burden of duty through it all, welcoming the return of peace "with charity to all, with malice to none," was given an apotheosis that grows brighter to every generation of citizens of the great American Republic.



